

**ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR NIGERIAN STUDENTS PURSUING LIS DEGREES.**

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**Abstract**

Librarianship is an important and dynamic profession that provides a wide range of career opportunities for students in Nigeria. Overall, this paper aims to demonstrate the wide range of career opportunities available in librarianship and to encourage Nigerian students to explore this exciting and rewarding profession. It explores the various career paths available in librarianship and how Nigerian students can prepare themselves for success in this field. The paper begins by discussing what library, librarian, and librarianship are all about. It then examines the different roles and responsibilities of librarians, including reference and instruction services, collection development, cataloging and metadata, and information literacy instruction. Next, the paper explores the various types of libraries and librarians in Nigeria, such as academic libraries, public libraries, and special libraries, and the career opportunities that each offers. Finally, the paper provides recommendations for Nigerian students interested in pursuing a career in librarianship, including suggestions for coursework, internships, and professional development opportunities.

**Keywords:** Libraries, Librarians, Librarianship, Professional development opportunities, career opportunities

**Introduction**

A library can be regarded as a collection of books and non-book materials which have been carefully selected based on some certain criteria, acquired, organized, preserved, and disseminated to meet the information needs of users. A library is a collection of books, journals, documents, and other resources organized for use, study, and research. It serves as a repository

of information that supports learning, research, and personal development (Aina and Owolabi, 2020). A library is a collection of printed works, journals, online resources, and other items that are kept and used by a public institution, a private person, or a public body. Libraries are essential tools for community growth, research, and education in Nigeria (Ogunsheye, 2017).

For ages, libraries have played an important role in society. They are locations where people can find books, wisdom, and information. The management and organization of these materials, on the other hand, is the responsibility of librarians. Although helping clients find and check out books was the traditional function of librarians, today they also perform several other activities. Students now have a wide range of job opportunities, thanks to how the function of librarians has changed with the development of technology in the digital age.

Librarians are the specialists responsible for the overall activities and services rendered by the library such as acquisition, cataloging and classification, circulation/ dissemination of information, preservation of information, and storage of information among others. Professionals in charge of managing and organizing libraries and information centers are known as librarians. They are essential in facilitating access to information resources, encouraging information literacy, and advancing research and education (Oduwole and Lawal, 2017).

Academic librarians work in colleges and universities where they provide research, information literacy, and resource management support to faculty and students. Public librarians offer a variety of services to the community through their employment in public libraries, including reference, circulation, programming, and outreach services. School librarians assist students with research, technology use, and information literacy development in elementary, middle, and high

schools. Special librarians manage and arrange information about particular fields or industries while working in specialized environments like businesses, legal firms, and governmental organizations. Digital librarians manage and preserve digital collections, produce metadata, and provide access to digital materials in digital libraries and archives. In view of the above the focus of this study is to analyse the relevant Career Opportunities for Nigerian students pursuing LIS Degrees.

### **Roles of Librarianship and Librarians in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The profession of librarianship is concerned with the organization, management, and supply of information resources and services in libraries. The development of Nigeria's education and information sectors depends heavily on the profession of librarianship, which is crucial to the country's success (Adetimirin, 2018). The management, preservation, and transmission of information resources are within the purview of librarianship. Librarianship is essential for facilitating information access, advancing literacy, and fostering research in academia (Oduwole and Ogunyade, 2020). Also, Adeniran (2019), view librarianship as the professional practice of managing and providing access to information resources, including books, electronic resources, and other materials, to meet the information needs of users.

In line with the foregoing, Aina (2014) posits that the organization, management, preservation, and transmission of physical and digital information resources for societal benefit are the focus of the profession of librarianship. In Nigeria, librarianship is essential for advancing information literacy, fostering the free exchange of ideas within the community, and supporting

educational and research endeavors. Librarianship in Nigeria has many benefits that positively impact society. According to Adedibu, (2016), these benefits include:

1. Information preservation and dissemination: Libraries and librarians are essential to keeping information alive and making it available to the public. They give people access to databases, books, journals, and other materials that help with learning research, and community growth.
2. Information literacy: By instructing people on how to successfully access, assess, and apply information, librarians help to foster information literacy. As a result, people are more equipped to make informed, thoughtful, and active contributions to society.
3. Support for education and research: By granting access to resources that promote learning and discovery, libraries and librarians help education and research. Additionally, they offer services that improve the research process, including training, interlibrary loans, and reference help.
4. Community development: By facilitating access to information that fosters economic, social, and cultural growth, libraries and librarians play a significant role in community development. Additionally, they provide services and activities that encourage civic engagement and foster lifelong learning.

One of the functions of librarians is acquisition of library materials: Acquisition can be referred to as the process of gathering all library resources for usage by library clientele. It may be through legal deposit, gifts, donations, direct purchase, exchange, and bequeath. The act of getting or gaining library items, whether through a purchase, a donation, or an exchange, is

known as acquisition. Choosing and identifying pertinent items, haggling with suppliers or contributors, handling orders, and receiving and documenting the materials are all necessary steps in this procedure. (Akande and Oyeboade, 2015). Others are discussed below.

**Organization of library materials:** This is the process of arranging and coordinating resources, such as personnel, materials, and equipment, to achieve specific goals and objectives. According to Ajiboye (2016), The management of library resources, infrastructure, and services systematically and effectively is referred to as organization in the context of libraries. Organization of library materials is very vital in running its services. The organization is not limited only to materials, it includes organizing its staff, building into departments, sections, and units. In this regard, the paper is going to discuss issues in challenges and prospects of cataloguing and classification (Muhammad, Baffa and Garba, 2018).

**Storage:** In the library context, this refers to the visible space and medium used for maintaining and preserving library resources for posterity use by library clients. The physical area and equipment used to store and maintain library resources, including books, periodicals, audiovisual materials, and electronic resources, are referred to as storage. The safety and long-term preservation of the materials must be ensured by the design and management of the storage facilities (Oketunji, 2015).

**Dissemination of information:** This refers to the process of making information available to users at the right time and in the right format to meet their information needs. Circulation of information according to Mole (2023) refers to the various activities carried out by the librarian aimed at disseminating information or making information accessible to users. It is the link

between information and users. Information dissemination is the process of sharing new or existing information with others. It can be done verbally, through writing, or via technology. Dissemination is a key component of effective communication, as it ensures that information reaches its intended audience (Bhasin, 2023).

**Community Engagement:** Through outreach initiatives like book clubs, author presentations, and literacy initiatives, librarians interact with their communities. To make sure the library is serving the needs of teachers, students, and other stakeholders, they also try to develop partnerships with these groups. American Library Association (2018) defined community engagement as the process of working collaboratively with community members who may be library customers, residents, faculty, students or partner organizations to address issues for the betterment of the community.

**Management and upkeep of a range of technologies:** Librarians are responsible for the management and upkeep of a range of technologies, including databases, digital repositories, and library management systems. They are accountable for ensuring that these systems are operating correctly, updating them as required, and offering technical support to users. Momoh (2018), posit that libraries also in an attempt to respond to change and growth based on the fifth law of librarianship introduced the use of computers and other technologies into their day-today operations. Therefore, operations such as acquisition, cataloguing and classification etc shifted from the manual method to the automated method. The introduction of technology also brought about the development of certain concepts such as e-resources, e-libraries, digitalization etc.

Reference services: These are the services provided by the reference department in a library that helps the library patron to get access to the information that they needed. Reference department provide library user with direction to the library materials, give advice on library collections and services on various kind of information form variety of sources. Reference department basically helps user to answer the questions that the user have in mind as well as helping the user to locate the information that they need in the library (Abdulkadir, 2012). To assist users in finding information and providing guidance, librarians offer reference services. This can entail assisting users with their research, instructing them on how to use databases and other tools, and guiding them through complex information systems.

Instruction in information literacy: This is provided by librarians, who show consumers how to locate, assess, and utilize information efficiently. This includes imparting knowledge on subjects like search tactics, critical thinking, and plagiarism avoidance. Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning (Association of College Research Libraries, 2015).

### **LIS Students**

Students are individuals who are enrolled in a formal educational program at a learning institution and are seeking knowledge, skills, and competencies to succeed in their future careers (Husain & Ramli, 2020). Students are individuals who are engaged in the process of learning and acquiring knowledge, typically in a formal educational setting (Karpicke and Roediger, 2008). In

addition, Gómez-Aguilar et al. (2020), state that LIS students are individuals who are enrolled in an academic program focused on the study of libraries and information, including the organization, retrieval, and dissemination of information resources. LIS students are described as individuals who are pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree in library and information science, to develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for a career in the library and information profession (Webster & Robbins, 2019).

### **Career opportunity**

The term "career opportunity" refers to a person's chances or possibilities to pursue and improve in their career, including employment opportunities, educational opportunities, professional advancement opportunities, and access to jobs. It is impacted by several variables, including monetary conditions, technological developments, and population shifts. Career opportunities are the possibilities for a person's professional development and growth within a specific industry or occupational field (Lent and Brown, 2019). In the same view, Zunker (2016), defines career opportunities as the numerous avenues and choices available to people so they can improve their careers, pick up new skills and information, and accomplish their professional objectives. Career opportunity according to Nguyen (2020) refers to the potential for advancement in a particular field of work or occupation, based on an individual's qualifications, skills, and experience.

Opportunities for advancement and success in a person's chosen profession or field are referred to as career opportunities. Career prospects in librarianship cover a wide range of positions, from traditional library employment to emerging digital roles (Akomolafe and Ajayi,



2020). In the same vein, Okebukola (2018) noted that career opportunities are the chances or options that people have to pursue the careers or professions they want. Globalization, technology improvements, and shifting workforce dynamics all have an impact on job chances in the 21st century, and individuals must develop a broad variety of skills and competencies to thrive.

The numerous career pathways and job responsibilities that are open to people in the field of library and information science are referred to as librarianship career opportunities. Opportunities in information management, records management, and knowledge management are a few examples of these possibilities, along with jobs in universities, and public, and special libraries (Ajiboye and Oluwole, 2017). Similarly, Singh and Sharma (2021), assert that data analysts, information architects, knowledge managers, digital librarians, and web content managers are just a few of the roles that are open to career options in librarianship in the digital age. These positions call for a blend of traditional library knowledge and cutting-edge technologies, data analysis, and user-experience design skills.

Furthermore, Okoro and Asogwa (2018), postulate that several variables, such as the status of the economy, the standard of education and training, and the degree of competition in the labor market, have an impact on the career options for librarians in Nigeria. Opportunities could be found in roles managing information and knowledge in public and private sector businesses as well as academic, public, and special libraries.

Career opportunities in librarianship according to Joseph and Joshua (2021), refer to the various roles and positions that librarians can pursue and excel in, such as academic librarians,

digital librarians, research librarians, and information management specialists. The 21st century has brought about new and emerging roles for librarians, requiring them to acquire additional skills and knowledge to remain competitive and relevant. Career opportunities for librarians in Nigerian universities refer to the various positions and levels of responsibility that librarians can aspire to, such as departmental heads, systems librarians, catalogers, and archivists. However, career opportunities for librarians in Nigerian universities also come with challenges such as limited funding, poor remuneration, and inadequate infrastructure, which can hinder career advancement (Chidi, 2019).

More so, Idiegbeyan-ose and Isah (2020), noted that emerging career opportunities for librarians in Nigeria refer to new and innovative roles that are becoming increasingly important in the digital age, such as data management, digital preservation, user experience, and digital curation. These emerging roles require librarians to acquire additional skills and knowledge to be able to perform effectively. The demand for librarians is increasing as more and more people turn to libraries for information and knowledge. With the growth of digital technologies, the need for librarians who can manage and organize digital resources has also increased. This means that there are many career opportunities for students who are interested in librarianship.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment of librarians is projected to grow 5% from 2019 to 2029, which is faster than the average for all occupations. Librarianship provides a sense of fulfillment and purpose in addition to employment stability. To develop a love of reading and exploration, promote information literacy, and support lifelong learning, librarians are crucial. They can provide access to knowledge and information that can change

people's lives. Students who work as librarians can advance society and have a good effect on their local communities.

There are a wide variety of career opportunities in librarianship for students, according to American Library Association (2009) and they include:

- a) Library managers are responsible for the operations of a department or library branch. They often manage budgets as well as train and evaluate employees.
- b) Library directors have the main leadership role in the library. The duties of a library director can vary greatly but often include: preparation and oversight of the budget; strategic planning and development of policies; fundraising and public and relations; interactions with the governing board; hiring, motivating and firing staff.
- c) **D**igital librarians plan and supervise the digitization, organization and preservation of library materials for online access. Digital librarian positions require good project management skills and specialized knowledge of digital library technologies, protocols and procedures.
- d) School library media specialists are usually part of a school system serving students between Kindergarten and grade 12. They are often required to have a second degree in education or a certificate in school media. Duties of a school library media specialist include: Administer the school library; instruct individual students, classes, and faculty in effective research methods; work with educators to design and teach curriculum.

- e) Systems librarians are responsible for the information technology infrastructure for the library: develop, troubleshoot and maintain the information technology infrastructure for the library's systems, and must possess a high level of computer skills.
- f) Reference librarians help people doing research to find the information they need. They may be generalists or have a specialized subject expertise.
- g) Children's and young adult librarians organize activities and provide appropriate materials for children at all age levels.
- h) Outreach librarians perform outreach to underrepresented groups such as people with disabilities, low income neighborhoods, homebound adults
- i) Instruction librarians teach information literacy skills in face-to-face classes and/or through the creation of online learning objects.

### **Professional development opportunities for Nigerian Library and information science students**

The term "professional development opportunities" in the context of librarianship is used to describe a variety of learning and development opportunities aimed at improving students' expertise in the field of library and information science. These possibilities might come in a variety of shapes, such as internships, volunteer work, professional associations, conferences and workshops, continuing education courses, research, and publications.

**Internships:** Many libraries offer internship programs for students, providing hands-on experience in various aspects of library operations. Internships can help students develop practical skills and build professional relationships. According to Gault, Leach and Duey (2010),

academic internships are a bridge to link the theory and practice by taking part in supervised and scheduled work. These internship programs not only improve students' personal skills but also polish their professional growth and experience.

**Volunteer work:** Volunteering at a library can provide valuable experience and exposure to library operations and services. Lyttle and Walsh (2017), defined volunteer as a person who was laid off and wants something to do while looking for another job, as a teenager who needs volunteer hours for a school club, as a retiree who wants a reason to get up in the morning, as a widower who has one day a week where he can see and talk to people and feel of value to someone again. The library provides these volunteers with direct benefits that make their lives better

**Professional associations:** Joining a professional association, such as the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), as a student member can provide access to networking opportunities, scholarships, and other resources that can help students grow their knowledge and skills. Professional Association such as the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) gives library's occupation ground for exchange of ideas, self control and some other benefits (Nkebem, 2009).

**Conferences and workshops:** Attending conferences and workshops can provide opportunities for students to learn about new technologies, trends, and best practices in librarianship. These events can also provide opportunities for networking and collaboration with other professionals. Professional development according to Baro, Fyneman and Zoukemefa (2013) may cover areas such as engaging in research in order to contribute to the literature, attending

conferences/workshops, mentoring, receiving specialized training, or attending continuing education classes.

**Continuing education courses:** Many universities and professional organizations offer continuing education courses in areas such as cataloging and metadata, information retrieval, and information literacy. These courses can be taken online or in person and can help students stay up-to-date with the latest developments in the field (Settlement.org, 2021).

**Research and publication:** Conducting research and publishing papers or articles in student journals or at academic conferences can help students demonstrate their expertise in librarianship and prepare them for future careers. Raven (2012), noted that students can be guided very early in their studies about appropriate academic research practices, and librarians and professors can provide students with improved research instructions.

### **Challenges Associated with career opportunities for Nigerian Library and information science students**

There are several challenges that Nigerian students face in terms of career opportunities in librarianship. Some of these challenges include:

1. **Limited job opportunities:** There are limited job opportunities in the field of librarianship in Nigeria. This is due to a lack of investment in the sector and the perception that libraries are not essential in the digital age. As a result, students may struggle to find employment after completing their studies (Amusa, Iyoro, and Olabisi, 2013).

2. **Low remuneration:** The remuneration for librarians in Nigeria is relatively low compared to other professions. This makes it difficult for students to make a living from their work, especially if they have student loans or other financial obligations (Uhegbu, 2011).
3. **Poor working conditions:** Many libraries in Nigeria have poor working conditions, including inadequate infrastructure, outdated equipment, and inadequate staffing. This can make it difficult for students to provide quality service to patrons and may lead to burnout or frustration (Olaajo, Oyeboade, and Gbotosho, 2017).
4. **Lack of public awareness:** There is a lack of public awareness of the importance of libraries in Nigeria. This means that libraries may not receive the support they need from the government and other stakeholders, making it difficult for students to build a successful career in the field. Baro, Ebiagbe, and Godfrey (2013), assert that lack of public awareness on the library affect the students career development opportunities.
5. **Limited access to technology:** Many libraries in Nigeria may not have the necessary technology to provide modern library services, such as online databases and electronic resources. This can make it difficult for students to gain experience working with modern library technology. Abubakar (2010), noted that access to technology should be adequate because information and communication technology have a positive impact on library profession and must be embraced by Nigerian library schools just as their counterparts in other parts of the world.
6. **Lack of funding for libraries:** Another major challenge faced by Nigerian students pursuing a career in librarianship is the lack of funding for libraries. Many libraries in

Nigeria are poorly funded, and this makes it difficult for them to acquire new resources, pay salaries, and keep up with modern technologies (Okoye, Imo, and Igbo, 2011).

## **Recommendations**

Here are some recommendations on how Nigerian students can unlock the world of career opportunities in librarianship:

1. **Pursue a degree in library and information science:** Nigerian students who are interested in a career in librarianship should consider pursuing a degree in Library and Information Science. This degree program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to manage information resources, develop information services, and provide access to knowledge.
2. **Gain experience through internships:** Nigerian students can gain valuable experience in librarianship by participating in internships. These internships provide students with hands-on experience working in libraries and information centers and can help them build their skills and knowledge in the field.
3. **Develop technology skills:** In today's digital age, librarianship requires a strong understanding of technology and information systems. Nigerian students interested in librarianship should develop technology skills, including proficiency in database management, website development, and digital content creation.
4. **Stay up-to-date with trends in the field:** Nigerian students interested in librarianship should stay informed about current trends and developments in the field. This can be



done by attending conferences, reading industry publications, and participating in professional development activities.

5. Consider specialized areas of librarianship: Librarianship offers a range of specialized areas, including academic libraries, public libraries, special libraries, and archives. Nigerian students interested in librarianship should consider exploring these different areas to determine which best aligns with their interests and skills.
6. Develop strong communication and interpersonal skills: Librarianship is a people-focused profession that requires strong communication and interpersonal skills. Nigerian students interested in librarianship should focus on developing these skills through coursework, extracurricular activities, and professional development opportunities.
7. Embrace a spirit of lifelong learning: Finally, Nigerian students interested in librarianship should embrace a spirit of lifelong learning. This means staying curious, seeking out new opportunities for growth and development, and remaining open to new ideas and perspectives.

## **Conclusion**

Librarianship is a profession that offers a world of career opportunities for students. With the growth of digital technologies, the demand for librarians who can manage and organize digital resources is increasing. Librarianship also offers a sense of fulfillment and purpose as it allows students to contribute to the growth of society and make a positive impact on their communities. If you are interested in a career that involves promoting information literacy, lifelong learning, and knowledge dissemination, librarianship may be the right choice for you.

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